

Lee Morganett, Executive Director, Indiana Council for the Social Studies

Proposed Academic Standards 2007 Social Studies
A Review with Comments

As I began my review of the Social Studies Standards for the state of Indiana, I intended to read each standard and comment. I have decided not to use that approach. Rather, I am going to provide some comments that provide an overall review except for kindergarten and Grade 1. I provided comments related to kindergarten and Grade 1 to illustrate some of my concerns.

I find that some of the most important content for the social studies has been deleted from the K-8 standards (the social and behavioral sciences). Without including the social and behavioral science, students will not have the opportunity to learn about themselves and others in a way that will help them understand themselves and others. The social and behavioral sciences can help students learn the knowledge and skills necessary to become more effective citizens and parents.

It is surprising that in the 21st Century, the Indiana Department of Education is proposing a social studies curriculum that will focus heavily on an approach to learning that is outdated (Students are vessels to be filled with terms, names, and facts). And, in some cases it uses indoctrination as an approach to education. I would have hoped that education, particularly social studies education, would offer students a more interesting, useful, and meaningful education.

Kindergarten

Standard 1 History
Standard 2 Civics and Government
Standard 3 Geography
Standard 4 Economics

I honestly do not know how to respond to these standards. They appear to be a combination of useless information and indoctrination. Some of them also reflect a lack of understanding of child cognitive development (e.g., Standard K.2.2).

Grade 1

Standard 1 History
Standard 2 Civics and Government
Standard 3 Geography
Standard 4 Economics

“Students in Grade 1 examine changes in their own community over time and EXPLORE THE WAY PEOPLE LIVE AND WORK TOGETHER. They begin to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens as they interact with home, school, and nearby environments.”

If this had been the focus of the standard for grade one, it may have been worthwhile and useful. However, the standards do not match what is listed in the four standards. For example, look at Standard 1-History (on page 1 of 7). It does not reflect what was written in the sentence above about the focus of the social studies standards. Standard 3- Geography is unrelated to the focus stated for students in grade one above.

The social studies standards seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the role of social studies education in a democratic society. They also seem to reflect a misunderstanding of social studies education.

Grade 2

Grade 3

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8

Grade 9

Grade 10

Grade 11

Grade 12

This document was sent to the Fordham Foundation and the National Council for History Education for review. Both of these organizations are advocates of history. They are going to be happy if there is a strong emphasis on history. They will give a low rating if history is not the major emphasis in the curriculum standards. Likewise, the National Geographic Society, the National Center for Civic Education, and the National Center for Economic Education are subject area organizations that are focused on the teaching of their content areas. They will rate the standards highly if they think their subject area is a major focus in the standards. They will rate the standards lower if they think their content area has been slighted in the standards.

If reviews are going to be done by some national content oriented organizations, why not send the draft of the standards to content oriented areas such as the American Psychological Association, American Anthropological Association, and the American Sociological Association.

I am also curious about why the standards were not sent to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) for review. NCSS is the one national organization that focuses on social studies education.

The teaching of social studies education is not the same thing as the teaching of separate subject areas. The goals for social studies education should be different than the goals for the various content areas.

Lee Morganett
Executive Director of the Indiana Council for the Social Studies
Professor of Social Studies Education and Educational Psychology

From: Gilroy Donald [dgilroy@doe.state.in.us]
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2007 9:02 AM
To: Nancy Wolfe
Subject: Fwd: Social Standards Feedback
Nancy,

Please keep this as part of the SS evaluation results. The reason she got an error is because she wrote an anthology. The database field will only take 2,000 characters (and no, I won't increase it to take more at this stage in the game).

Don

Begin forwarded message:

> From: Gwen Kelley <gwenkelley@comcast.net>
> Date: August 30, 2007 8:51:05 AM EDT
> To: dgilroy@doe.state.in.us
> Subject: Social Standards Feedback
>
> I included the following comments on the Social Studies Standards review. A message came back that an error existed.
> Attached, find my comments and suggestions. Can you please forward them to the person who is taking feedback related to the standards.
> Thank you,
> Gwen Kelley
>
>

- > The curriculum has a very Eurocentric perspective. It is good to mention Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Madame C. J. Walker, and Fredrick Douglass, but other examples need to be included to represent African American contributions to Indianapolis, Indiana, and the US.
- >
- > There seems to be more mention of Native American Indians at most grade levels than there is of understanding contributions of past and current African Americans in the state and country.
- >
- > Grade K - Grade 3 are balanced, but will require a teacher who is culturally competent to add information related to contributions of all citizens from various backgrounds. Since it is not explicitly stated, I fear that many teachers will fail to add additional information beyond what they might specifically do for Black History Month (if they choose to observe it.)
- >
- > Grade 3 - I like the definitions included here and throughout all the documents.
- >
- > Grade 4 - I think that specific information needs to be given about the link between the Northwest Ordinance forbidding slavery, yet the Black Laws were instituted in most of the states.
- >
- > 4.1.9 Another example of early settlers include members of the the Black Settlements in Indiana. There were about 19 communities that were located in varied parts of the state. There also needs to mention of the role of the Quakers and the Methodists in helping to educate African Americans. Looking at the education system in Indiana,
- >
- > 4.1.11 needs to add the role of segregation and the formation of Black High Schools throughout the state in the 1920's.
- >
- > Early entrepreneurs should include Hulman in Terre Haute and his influence with Rose Hulman and in Indianapolis with the 500 Race Activities.
- >
- > Grade 5 - U.S history 5.1.5 needs to include forced movement and relocation of Africans to the U.S. and other countries in the Americas.
- >
- > 5.1.21 - Students need to actually read the Northwest Ordinance.
- >
- > There is not enough emphasis on the role of citizens who have immigrated from Spanish speaking nations, or citizens from the Asian and Pacific Island area. Where and how is their "story" included in American history. Do they have a part in local, state and national history? Are there any names that could be deliberately included at any grade level?
- >
- > Gr 7 - 7.1.14 Why is South Africa the main focus? How has colonization of all parts of Africa impacted it even today? Does colonization play a role in the current unrest, poverty, and politics in Africa at the present?
- >
- > Grade 8 - seems balanced. Add Northwest Ordinance to 8.1.33.
- >

> I am also concerned that Individual, Society, and Culture were omitted. I think that those focus points from the previous set of standards may be lost. They seem to be infused into the new draft, but I wonder if they will be glossed over by most teachers.

>

> Overall, I can tell that a great deal of work went into refining the standards.

>

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From: Glen, John Mathew [jglen@bsu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2007 2:03 PM
To: Nancy Wolfe
Subject: Social Studies Standards

September 4, 2007

Subject: Indiana Social Studies Standards

Thank you for the opportunity to assess the proposed update of Indiana's Academic Standards for K-8 and high school Social Studies. As a professional historian, my evaluation focuses on the standards as they are applied to the development of the historical consciousness among students. In general, the standards are clearly stated and pedagogically sound; they do not appear to differ in any significant way from the standards currently being used in the state of Indiana. As a consequence, they reinforce the positive portions of the standards, but they remain problematic in addressing one major area of U.S. History: the twentieth century.

The standards are particularly effective in introducing K-3 students to issues fundamental to the study of History: continuity and change, historical perspective, historical significance, comparative history, the process of gathering information about the past, and the distinction between fact and opinion. Students in grades 4 through 6 learn to analyze cause and effect, the idea of comparison and contrast, and the use of a variety of sources. These methodological questions are definitely appropriate and should be a regular component of an academic year's curriculum.

The approach suggested to help students better comprehend the ideas learned thus far in their education becomes somewhat problematic beginning with Grade 4. In that year students are presented with a rather mainstream version of Indiana history from around 1770 to the present; in the following year they learn U.S. History from the pre-Columbian era to 1800, with an emphasis on the American Revolution and the federal Constitution; Grade 6 students study a sweeping, and potentially cursory, story of European and American History from 1900 B.C.E. to the present; in the following year students examine the history of the non-Western world; and students in Grade 8 once again explore what they addressed three years earlier, with the chronology extended to 1877.

In effect, then, with the exception of the study of Indiana history in Grade 4, the Standards for K-8 students do not ever take them into an exploration of the history of the United States since 1900.

The Standards leave the burden of that task to a single two-semester course given sometime during the course of an Indiana high school curriculum. Even then, Standard 1 of this course returns for a third time to the period before 1877. It is understandable, even desirable, that students in this course conduct a research project as outlined in Standard 9. Yet it remains an open question as to whether these students can conduct any research into the history of Indiana or the United States during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries when they have received minimal exposure to those subjects.

Finally, there are some specific errors and omissions in the Standards that can be readily corrected: Standard 4.4.17 identifies a natural disaster as a historical subject, when History is a true story about the human past; 5.1.20 includes the battle of Gettysburg and the election of Abraham Lincoln in a Standard spanning pre-Columbian times up to 1800; USH 3.6 includes W.E.B. DuBois, but not Booker T. Washington; USH 4.8 refers to "isolationism" during the 1930s, thereby perpetuating an outworn stereotype refuted by decades of scholarship; Standard 7 entirely overlooks the rise of postwar feminism, which would in turn incorporate Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and the founding of the National Organization for Women; and Standard 8 would gain more coherence with references to the rise of neoconservatism.

In sum, this evaluation is intended to suggest not a revision of the updated Standards as they are worded, but a reconsideration of the ways in which Indiana's teachers and students can meet those objectives in Grades 4 through 12, particularly in terms of the chronological period they repeatedly review, on the one hand, and the period they only begin to explore, on the other.

I hope this assessment provides some useful feedback. Please let me know should you need further clarification.

TO: Nancy Wolfe, Curriculum Specialist

FROM: Denise E. Salsbury, Ph.D.

SUBJECT: Social Studies Standards Review

DATE: September 4, 2007

COMMENTS: [K-6 grades only]

1. First of all, Standard 5 does not exist in Draft Three. When considering the cultural diversity throughout the United States and the emphasis of the global community (e. g., Indiana's government officials attempting to draw international trade to the state), the absence of Standard 5 is very disturbing. Are the authors expecting children to suddenly understand their own culture and others suddenly in 6th grade without clear curriculum focus throughout grades K-5?

- Grade 2 contains added reference to culture in indicator 2.2.4 under *Roles of Citizens*.
- Grade 4 contains reference to culture in indicator 4.1.1 under *American Indians and the Arrival of Europeans to 1770*.

2. Social studies by definition is an ‘umbrella’ for more than 4 subject areas. Perhaps a visit to the National Council of the Social Studies’ website is in order to obtain suggestions for Social Studies Standards (note: The first standard topic is “culture.”)

3. Overall, History standards are the same with occasional clarifications of existing indicator statements and some additional concepts. Some important revisions were made throughout the grade levels, apparently in an attempt to clarify concepts, skills, and perspectives to be learned by students. Some additions were made to example lists that will be helpful to classroom teachers wanting to know specifics for focus of lessons. Do history educators really believe children in the 4th grade can gain understanding (& are interested in) of the concepts associated with the American Revolution (4.1.3) and Civil War Era (4.1.7)?

The inclusion of *Historical Research* is a good addition; it will be interesting to see how classroom teachers integrate literacy skills and various types of children’s literature into ACTIVE learning opportunities for students in grades 1-5; the category takes a different turn from sixth grade and above which is a bit disappointing (Why can’t at least one statement in the category refer to literature in grades 6 and up?).

4. Overall, Civics and Government standards revisions condense some indicator statements, rewording others, and very occasionally adding a concept. Most statements appear to be clarified and reorganized which will help the classroom teacher teach civic responsibilities. Occasional additional concepts have been added to existing statements. The addition of definitions will be extremely helpful to classroom teachers.

5. Overall, it is refreshing to see the Geography standards since their focus is clear. Also the indicator statements are clearly worded and focused on basic skills (e.g., *Places and Regions*—contains both absolute and relative concepts of place.). Most geographic indicators contain verbs from higher cognitive levels that are helpful to teachers as they attempt to write lesson objectives.

6. Overall, the Economic standards remain the same with few additions.

7. The addition of brief definitions in all standards will be very helpful and are easily accessible to a classroom teacher.

8. The additional standard indicators from grades 3-5 clarify curriculum that should be taught at each grade level, and scaffold concepts.

9. Coverage of Indiana history, geography, economics, and government are appropriate at every grade level (K-6).

Hope these comments help...

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